

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**DEVB(PL)270**

**(Question Serial No. 3597)**

Head: (82) Buildings Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (1) Buildings and Building Works  
Controlling Officer: Director of Buildings (HUI Siu-wai)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

In the reply it gave last year, the Buildings Department stated that the operation of its Joint Office with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to handle public reports about water seepage problems would be made permanent in 2014-2015. In addition, of the 64 non-civil service contract positions in the Buildings Department at that time, 17 were converted to civil service posts. Why did it still need to spend \$24 million on engaging outsourced consultants in 2014-2015?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (Member Question No. 61)

Reply:

In general, there are three stages in the investigation of a water seepage case conducted by the Joint Office (JO). Stage I (confirming the existence of water seepage nuisance) and Stage II (initial investigation) are carried out by the staff of the JO. Where the source of seepage cannot be identified in Stage II, Stage III (professional investigation) will be required. In Stage III, an outsourced consultant is engaged to assist in conducting detailed investigation including the carrying out of water ponding test, water spray test, etc. to identify the source of seepage. The staff of the JO act as the overall coordinator in Stage III and undertake subsequent enforcement actions, such as issuing nuisance notice and instigating prosecutions.

As the operation of the JO has been made permanent since April 2014, 17 non-civil service contract positions from the Buildings Department in the JO were converted to civil service posts in 2014-15. However, the conversion will not affect the engagement of outsourced consultants by the JO for Stage III (professional investigation) of the investigation of water seepage cases.

- End -